

NATURE NOTES.

SCALE How.

Tuesday, March 10th.—The rooks in the garden have been very busy for the last few days repairing the damage done by the storm. One or two of the nests have been replaced already. The birds seem very particular about the position of each twig. They come flying along, trailing long pieces of stick, &c., which sometimes seem to weigh them almost down to the ground. They somehow arrive at their own particular tree, fit their twig this way and that, till it is arranged to their satisfaction, and then they fly off for more. On Saturday afternoon an owl was seen in Dove's Nest woods. It came out of a hollow tree and was immediately attacked by a number of marsh tits. It seems strange that these small birds should show no fear of their deadly enemy in daylight, but quite turn the tables, and boldly put him to flight.

Friday, March 13th.—The rooks have evidently finished the outside of their nests, for they come down on to the grass now and dig up huge pieces of moss, and fly off with it to make their houses nice and cosy inside. They are terribly greedy, and often attempt to fly off with far more than they can carry, with the result that they come flapping down to the ground again and again, and finally have to abandon a portion of their burden.

Friday, March 20th.—We went for a bird walk this afternoon in spite of the pouring rain. Rain seems to be favourable to birds, for we saw a great many to-day. Tits were chasing each other, chaffinches flew gaily about the walls, and missel thrushes sang lustily from the tree tops. We watched two marsh-tits playing at hide and seek in the still bare branches of some oaks behind Rydal Mount, and we also saw a coal-tit. The marsh-tits are a brownish mouse colour with black heads, while the coal-tits are much darker, and have white cheeks.

We were fortunate enough to see two tree-creepers chasing each other round and round a tree. They are so small and dart about so quickly, that it is difficult to follow their movements.

Down at the edge of Rydal Water a pair of pied wagtails were pecking about amongst the damp grass. Near the rocks a coot swam rather aimlessly about, and a moor cock and moor hen took to the water in a desperate hurry as we came along. They evidently wanted to cross to the other side, but the current is very strong just where the Rothay flows out, and they seemed a little undecided as to how to get across. Finally the male bird swam against the current for some way till he reached smoother water, and then he turned and swam across to the other bank. Once on dry land he set off running as fast as he could, and finally disappeared. Meanwhile, the female bird had been having a hard struggle lower down the stream. She struck out boldly for the opposite shore, and after being tossed about a good deal she also landed on the other side, where she pecked about in an unconcerned way for a few seconds and then she ran off to join her mate in the reeds. The male bird is easily distinguished from the female by his red beak.

Monday, March 23rd.—We saw curlews this afternoon for the first time this year. Miss Kitching was out looking for them all afternoon, but we were the only favoured ones. They came up from Lakeside, I think, and as they were flying very high it was impossible to tell which was head and which was tail. As they flew over Wansfell they uttered their peculiarly low, sweet cry, and wheeled slowly round, high up in the air, as if uncertain which course to take. They scarcely seemed to move their wings as they finally sailed away and were hidden behind Wansfell.

Thursday, March 26th.—All the rivers are full to overflowing, and the Stock comes rushing down with its usual impetuosity, tumbling over the rocks in its haste to get down, down and away to the sea.

We walked to Skelwith this afternoon, and escaped with only a few sharp showers. This wet weather has been favourable to the growth of mosses and lichens, for the walls are simply clothed in a many-coloured garment. The yellow-green of the moss contrasts strongly with the bluer

green of the lichens, some of which are tipped with crimson. Here and there tiny brown and yellow fungi may be seen growing in the nooks and crannies, and every bit of wood lying on the damp banks is sure to have some delicately-coloured fungus decorating it. Some of these fungi are a lovely soft, velvety purple, others bright orange, and some many shades of brown, dull red, and yellow. Tiny polypods are uncurling in every chink and crack, and the lovely little spleenwort is also putting out fresh green fronds on its slender black stems. We saw two tiny lambs skipping about in a field and seeming to enjoy life, even though it did rain and the grass was soaking wet. Skelwith Falls were very full, and looked grand as the almost black volume came pouring over the rocks to be dashed into snow-white foam in the basin below.

Nearly all the birds seem to have paired now. It is quite comical to see the rooks in the garden. They seem to have a little rest about five o'clock in the evening and sit in pairs all over the sycamore and beech trees. Sometimes there is a solitary one sitting out on a branch away from the rest, and he always seems to have such a melancholy look as he watches the rest billing and cawing (one can hardly say cooing!).

Friday, March 27th.—We found Lady's Smock in flower this afternoon down in a marsh by Rydal Water.

Saturday, March 28th.—Still wet and stormy, but the rain kept off all the afternoon till about five o'clock, when it began to hail, and a long peal of thunder echoed amongst the hills. We went to Loughrigg Tarn to gather daffodils. After turning off the Skelwith road the scenery is very wild. The Langdale Pikes looked almost near as they appeared suddenly round a corner, standing out dark and blue against the lighter grey of the surrounding hills. The sun shining from behind a cloud sent a silvery gleam across the valley. At last, turning a sharp corner in the road, we saw the daffodils—

" Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze."

We gathered a quantity of the yellow bells, but there still seemed as many as ever when at last we tore ourselves away.

Tuesday, March 31st.—The liverwort is lovely just now,

growing in wet marshy nooks amongst the moss. The little black pin-heads on their delicate transparent stalks rise out of a tiny often crimson-tipped cup in the thallus.

Thursday, April 2nd.—We went for a scramble up the Nook stream, and finally arrived at Sweden Bridge.

The banks of the stream present a most pitiable appearance, for all the trees have been cut down except a solitary silver birch here and there. It is dreadfully sad to see all the stumps and little black heaps of charcoal all along the path. The celandines and anemones are growing in great profusion, and look like yellow and white stars shining out against the dark boggy ground.

We had a splendid view of Windermere as we came down Scandale.

Many of the sycamore trees are in leaf now, and the buds of others are such a lovely pink colour.

W. T.

LETTER TO STUDENTS.

DEAR STUDENTS,

As many of you will be leaving the House of Education this winter and going out into the world beyond, I have been asked to write you a formal letter of invitation to membership in The Students' Association. The Girls' Friendly Society has a beautiful prayer for its workers beginning "We who are associated together in this service." That idea, mutual service, is the foundation of our Association. We are all labouring to the same end, under the same guiding spirit; and we are all, consciously or unconsciously, adding to the ideas we have received—or losing them. The objects of our Association are to keep us in touch as a United Body, that what we have received may at last be garnered into a perfect whole each contributing her part, and that the possible loss of the individual may be made good by membership with others. The future of P.N.E.U. methods, and even in

some measure of P.N.E.U. thought, is in our hands—we dare not be false to such a trust, and surely we shall distrust our own weakness and feel stronger when together. Let no student become a Worker saying "What can the Association do for me?" Rather should we ask, "What can I do for the Association?" Briefly and practically many things.

1. Remember that our Organ and Means of Communication is our Magazine, now issued quarterly. Send to it new ideas gained by experience, or your discoveries as to theories and facts.
2. Do no grudge the yearly subscription of 3s. 6d.; pay it regularly to the treasurer every new year.
3. Wear the badge and the colours, to which only members of the Association have any right. These will be a means of identification, like the Masonic signs, by which we may know each other. (The colours are certainly unbecoming, but then they are distinctive, which was an absolute necessity.)
4. Attend any meetings or gatherings of students possible, whether you can hope to meet personal friends there or not.
5. When in a district where there are many students organize such meetings.

Above all remember that if our Magazine or our meetings seem dull and lifeless it is for you, the students, to put life into them. We are trained to give to the coming generations, and through them to the world—and shall we refuse to give of our best to our fellow-workers, or deny that our affairs are also of interest to each and all, for we are all about the same business?

Hoping therefore that you may all unhesitatingly enrol yourselves as loyal members of the Students' Association.

Yours very truly,

THE PRESENT MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION.

TRAVELLERS' LETTERS.

C.M.S. ZANANA HOUSE, MEERUT,
U.P., INDIA,
MARCH 19TH, 1903.

DEAREST ———

Have you got any more "drawn-thread" books you don't want? Because out here teachers are learning it, and they would be most acceptable. I could tell you lots more things I could make use of. Is "Mary's Grammar" still to be had? I have to teach these girls English twice a week, "building upon another man's foundations" it is with a vengeance, for they have tumbled somehow into a reading-book of extracts from classical authors, in which they understand half the sense, one-eighth of the words, and one-twentieth of the construction and idiom. I have to do the best I can, unscientifically. That is a fair sample of one's life in this vale of tears, isn't it? If I only had so-and-so, and could do so-and-so, how finely I could do; but as it is—! I have a Geographical Object Lesson Class. Last time I peeled citrons in the shapes of the continents, and made the world go round the sun. Next time we are going to learn how maps came to be; and one day have sand and water and make mountains and rivers. Of course the girls think it great fun, and incidentally pick up a good deal of odd knowledge, but I don't suppose any of them have the pluck to give the lessons again in their schools. I've just been interrupted to go and see a snake the ayah has just found outside Miss ——— bathroom. It is as tiny as an earthworm, but may be deadly poison. Miss ——— collects the creatures! no, not alive, in spirits of wine.

It's warming up; my room is 72° shut up. We shall begin our summer hours next week, I expect. Next month I am to have charge of one of the schools—taking it altogether off Miss ——— hands. As I haven't even been to one of them yet, I feel qualmish! I am going with her to-morrow and to some Zananas which will belong to me afterwards. In many Zananas, to which she is just beginning to go again, she finds ready listeners—not all, however. One